



Enhancing Young Children's Access to Local Foods and Farm to ECE: **Federal Funding Opportunities**

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Purpose and Organization

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had profound impacts across food and early care and education (ECE) systems that has exacerbated inequities and racial injustices in food, health, and education.¹ While severely devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis, the ECE sector and food and agriculture systems are ripe with opportunity to build back with greater equity and resiliency. Farm to early care and education (farm to ECE) can be a component of building back better.

Funding is a necessary resource to build up and carry out farm to ECE activities. There are a variety of funding sources that states, localities, and organizations have strategically used to support the procurement of culturally relevant local foods; gardening activities; and food, nutrition, and agricultural education for ECE sites. This guide provides functional descriptions of actionable and timely funding streams, including an overview of the funding eligibility requirements, allowed uses, timeline, flow of funds, and strategies for action. The guide also highlights case examples of how entities across the country are creatively leveraging funding streams for farm to ECE. The purpose of this guide is to prepare and position farm to ECE partners to effectively apply for funding.

Funding opportunities highlighted in this guide are for states, localities, government agencies, and community-based organizations. The funding streams are organized into three overlapping categories: food and agriculture, health and nutrition, and early care and education. Each funding opportunity is followed by a recent state or local example of how the funding has been actively leveraged for a range of farm to ECE activities.

¹ Early Care and Education (ECE) is a standard, all-encompassing term that will be used throughout the document to describe all types of early care and education settings, including but not limited to: child care (home and center-based as well as nonprofit and for-profit), Head Start, and Pre-Kindergarten programs.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School (F2S) Grants

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$12 million (Fiscal Year [FY] 2022)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS)

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA)

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing, grant

ELIGIBILITY: Institutions, including schools, school districts that operate the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Program(s), and non-school based institutions that operate CACFP and/or SFSP; State agencies; Local agencies; Indian tribal organizations; Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; and Nonprofit entities

STATE CONTACTS: USDA F2S Grant Program general email, farmtoschool@usda.gov, or USDA [National and Regional Farm to School Staff](#)

OVERVIEW

The Farm to School program, established by the NSLA, helps organizations implement activities related to increasing access to local and fresh foods in schools. NSLA provides \$5 million to the Department of Agriculture annually for grants and technical assistance for Farm to School programs. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) OCFS, which houses the F2S Grant Program, provides additional funding through agricultural appropriations.

There are several types of F2S grants (Turnkey, Implementation, and State Agency). Schools, ECE locations, or institutions that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program, National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and/or the National School Breakfast Program, Indian Tribal organizations, agricultural producers, and nonprofit entities are all eligible for the Turnkey grant for action planning, edible gardens, or agricultural education curriculum projects. These entities are also eligible to apply for Implementation grants. State

agencies can apply for a State Agency grant or for a Turnkey grant through producer training projects. State Agency F2S grants are not limited to state agencies that administer child nutrition programs. The maximum grant award amount is \$500,000.

The funding for this program flows from the federal government directly to the grantee, so organizations get the money upfront, instead of as a reimbursement. When applying, USDA asks for specifics on how your organization is allocating the funding with justification for the amount that you are requesting. F2S grants have a 25 percent match requirement. Farm to ECE can be the focus of these grants. One major restriction to note is that the funds cannot be used to purchase food for any reason, but otherwise the USDA provides flexibility for most farm to ECE activities. Organizations can also make changes for planned grant activities if these changes are submitted during a certain timeframe. In the 2021 grant cycle, 30 grants were focused on farm to ECE activities, including four in California and three in Georgia.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Logan Heights Community Development Corporation

CALIFORNIA | \$43,560 (2021)

Logan Heights Community Development Corporation is a non-profit organization, located in San Diego, California, who successfully applied for a Turnkey grant through the USDA. They are using their funding to plan and create an edible garden at its Future Achievers Preschool, which cares for 70 two- to five-year-old children. A Master Gardener and volunteers will help students understand the science and other concepts involved in cultivating food. They will also teach the children about related careers and academic paths. The edible garden provides healthy food options throughout the school day for children from low-income families, as well as encourages a sense of pride in the community.

(continued on next page)

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about the [USDA Farm to School Program](#) grant opportunity
- ▶ View the state [grantees list](#) for Fiscal Year 2021
- ▶ Subscribe to the [Office of Community Food System's E-letter](#)

TIMELINE

The Request for Applications (RFA) is released **annually** around **October**, with a **deadline in early January**.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT**Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning****GEORGIA | \$63,408 for two years (2020–2022)**

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), a state agency focused on enhancing the quality of early childhood education, successfully applied for the USDA F2S grant to strengthen and expand the reach of farm to ECE initiatives in Georgia. DECAL is the ultimate decision maker for their funding from USDA. They used their funding to host a state-wide farm to ECE conference and conduct several meetings with partnering organizations to receive recommendations and feedback on future activities and challenges related to farm to ECE. From these recommendations, they learned that technical assistance is needed to help make farm to ECE practical from an organizational standpoint (such as how to follow food safety guidelines, time management, etc.) and many larger vendors do not know that there is a market in childcare because the ECE economy is too small to meet minimum purchasing requirements.

The state was also able to build off a solid foundation from years of effort and coordination between DECAL, the Department of Public Health, and other key partners from the Georgia Farm to ECE Coalition, which produced the [Georgia Farm to School/ECE 2021–2025 strategic plan](#). These conversations helped the state to lay the groundwork for potential strategies for using the USDA grant and gain a better understanding of the field to inform their grant proposal. Potential applicants at the state agency level can also consider partnering with other organizations working more closely with stakeholders on the ground as they explore available funding opportunities through the USDA F2S grant program.



Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$4.5 Billion (Estimate for FY 2021)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: FNS

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing, Reimbursement

ELIGIBILITY: State departments that administer CACFP, child care centers, family child care homes, afterschool programs, Head Start programs, adult care centers, and emergency shelters

STATE CONTACTS: [State Department Administering CACFP](#)



OVERVIEW

CACFP is a federal nutrition program that reimburses enrolled child care centers, family child care homes, afterschool programs, adult day care centers, or emergency shelters for nutritious meals and snacks for eligible children and adults. CACFP improves participants' nutrition, reduces obesity, strengthens the quality of early care, and can help boost and stabilize child care providers' income and services.

CACFP can support farm to ECE programming by defraying the costs associated with local food procurement, garden development and maintenance, and, even, educational costs. CACFP providers can procure local food directly from producers, food hubs, farmers markets, and [community supported agriculture](#) models. CACFP funds can also be used for gardening

items (seeds, fertilizer, watering cans, rakes, etc.) as long as the produce grown in the garden will be used as part of reimbursable meals or nutrition education activities. State administrative funds can also be used to provide technical assistance and coordination of farm to ECE activities.

USDA's FNS administers CACFP through grants to states. CACFP is administered within most states by the state's educational agency. In a few states it is administered by an alternate agency, such as the state health or agriculture department. State agencies then provide cash reimbursement to program sponsors and providers. ECE providers that wish to participate in CACFP should contact their [state agency](#) to apply or identify a CACFP sponsor to help them participate in the program.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids & Farms

MICHIGAN | \$5 Million in 2022 State Budget

Established in 2016, [10 Cents A Meal For Michigan's Kids & Farms](#), is a state-funded program providing schools and ECE sites participating in NSLP or CACFP with matched incentive funding. Funding is up to 10 cents per meal to purchase and serve Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes. The program's goal is to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for Michigan children in school and ECE settings, as well as invest in Michigan agriculture and related local food business economy. In the fiscal year 2021, the program was expanded statewide, allowing ECE sites to participate. The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Education who awarded [149 grantees](#) funding in FY 2021.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about [CACFP](#) and [Farm to CACFP](#)
- ▶ Contact your [state agency](#) or find a [CACFP sponsor](#) to apply to use CACFP.
- ▶ Work with partners to encourage ECE providers to participate in CACFP.
- ▶ Advocate to your state agency to include farm to ECE in the planned state administrative fund activities.

TIMELINE

Applications for an ECE provider to participate in CACFP are accepted on a **rolling basis**.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$6 Billion (FY 2021)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: FNS

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: State departments of health, Tribal Governments, territories. WIC serves individuals who are pregnant, breastfeeding up to one year after delivery, postpartum up to six months after delivery, and infants or children from birth to five years of age

STATE CONTACTS: [State Department Administering WIC](#)

OVERVIEW

WIC is a federal nutrition program that provides low-income, nutritionally at-risk individuals who are pregnant, postpartum, infants, and children up to 5 years old with nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care. WIC improves participants' health, dietary intake, and gestational outcomes. WIC also supports learning and development, reduces food insecurity, and helps to alleviate poverty. In addition, WIC supports economic stability and improves the availability of healthy foods in low-income communities through participating stores.

WIC provides participants with a monthly cash value benefit (CVB) that can be used to purchase fruits and vegetables at any WIC-approved vendor, including supermarkets, corner stores, farmers markets, and roadside stands. However, only certain states allow WIC CVB to be used at farmers markets and roadside stands.

WIC funds flow to [state agencies](#) (states, District of Columbia, Indian Tribal Organizations, and Territories) through grants. State agencies then allocate funding to

local agencies based on WIC participation caseloads. WIC participants receive monthly food package benefits via a WIC Electronic Benefit Transfer card in most states. Some states still distribute paper voucher benefits.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about [WIC](#) and contact your [state WIC agency](#) to see if CVB redemption is enabled at farmers markets.
- ▶ Advocate to your state agency to ensure their state plan allows authorized farmers and farmers markets to accept CVB.
- ▶ Work with farmers markets and roadside stands to become WIC-approved vendors, accepting CVB. Farmers or farmers markets that would like to be WIC vendors should contact their [state agency](#).
- ▶ Promote WIC to eligible families.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

The American Rescue Plan (ARP), enacted on March 11, 2021, included a provision that expanded access to fruits and vegetables for mothers and children participating in WIC. Before the provision, WIC food packages provided \$9 for fruits and vegetables per month for children and \$11 per month for women. The ARP provided funding for states to increase the monthly value of fruits and vegetables in both the women's and children's food package up to \$35 per month for up to four months. This more than tripled the usual benefit. Funds had to be distributed by September 30, 2021. The fruit and vegetable benefit increase was extended for the months of [October through December 2021](#) and again for the months of [January through March 2022](#). The monthly benefit increased to an amount recommended by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine — \$24 for children, \$43 for pregnant and postpartum participants, and \$47 for breastfeeding participants.

Learn more about the [ARP provision that increased the fruit and vegetable CVB](#) and use [this outreach toolkit](#) highlighting the WIC Fruit and Vegetable benefit increase to encourage benefit redemption at WIC approved farmers markets.

TIMELINE

Eligible individuals can apply for WIC at any time. [To apply](#), individuals should go to their [state's website](#) or call the [toll-free number](#). WIC state agencies are responsible for submitting an annual state plan to FNS. State plans are due to FNS by **August 15**.

WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$21 million (FY 2021)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: FNS

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: State departments of health, Tribal Governments, territories, infants over 4 months old, children, and pregnant and postpartum individuals enrolled in WIC

STATE CONTACTS: [State Department Administering WIC FMNP](#)

OVERVIEW

Established in 1992, FMNP provide infants over 4 months old, children, and pregnant and postpartum individuals enrolled in WIC with coupons or electronic benefits to buy fresh produce from authorized farmers, farmers markets, and roadside stands. FMNP benefits are in addition to the regular monthly WIC cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables. WIC FMNP also teaches participants how to select, store, and prepare fresh produce to improve their families' diets. The goal of the program is to increase participants' consumption of healthy local produce and to increase awareness and support of local agriculture.

In Fiscal Year 2021, 49 states operated the WIC FMNP and nearly 1.2 million WIC participants received benefits. State agencies apply for FMNP funding by submitting a plan to USDA FNS describing how the state will implement and monitor the program. WIC funds flow to state agencies (states, DC, Indian Tribal Organizations, and Territories) through grants. Grants cover 100 percent of food costs and 70 percent of the state administrative costs. Local agencies issue FMNP benefits in the form of checks or coupons to eligible WIC participants. Benefits

must be at least \$10 and at most \$30 per person per year, though states can opt to supplement the federal FMNP benefit level with state funding. WIC FMNP checks come in values of \$2 or \$4, to be used only at WIC-approved farmers markets.

Farmers or farmers markets wishing to accept WIC FMNP benefits must first become an authorized vendor by applying to their state agency. Authorized vendors are selected based on WIC participants' geographic concentration in the area and access to the marketplace.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about the [WIC FMNP](#).
- ▶ Advocate to your [state agency](#) to ensure they operate the WIC FMNP.
- ▶ Work with farmers markets and roadside stands to become WIC FMNP-approved vendors.
- ▶ Promote WIC to potentially eligible families.



TIMELINE

Eligible individuals can apply for WIC at any time. **To apply**, individuals should go to their [state's website](#) or call the [toll-free number](#). The WIC FMNP season varies from state to state but typically occurs during peak local produce seasons. WIC state agencies are responsible for submitting an annual FMNP plan to FNS. State plans are due to FNS by **August 15**. Farmers or farmer's markets that would like to be WIC vendors should contact their [state agency](#).

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$73 million annually + \$97 million COVID-19 stimulus (FY 2021)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: Agriculture Marketing Service

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Farm Bill + House of Representatives (H.R.) 133 Stimulus Funding

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing Funding + Temporary Funding during COVID-19

ELIGIBILITY: State departments of agriculture, non-profit organizations; producer groups; trade associations; state and local governments; and colleges and universities

STATE CONTACTS: [State Department of Agriculture](#)

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the [SCBGP](#) is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).”

Examples of projects aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops related to farm to ECE include, increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops through outreach, education, and marketing campaigns; improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; assisting entities in the specialty crop distribution chains in developing “Good Agricultural Practices” and other food safety requirements ([SCBGP, FY 2021 RFA](#)).

Organizations interested in the SCBGP apply to their [state agency](#) for funding. Eligible organizations include producer groups, trade associations, nonprofits, and colleges and universities. State Departments of Agriculture are then eligible to apply directly to USDA for grant funds. The grant is open annually with a maximal grant period of up to three years. The H.R. 133 Stimulus funds are available from September 2021 through September 2025.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about the [SCBGP](#).
- ▶ Coordinate with farm to ECE partners to develop a project proposal for SCBGP funding.
- ▶ Reach out to your [state contact](#) to apply for funding and encourage them to include farm to ECE initiatives in the state plan.
- ▶ View [previously funded SCBGP projects](#) for ideas.

TIMELINE

The USDA SCBGP request for proposals (RFP) is released annually. States release their own RFPs before the federal deadline to elicit projects from the community. Individuals, organizations, and other non-federal entities first apply to their [state agency](#) for funding. **Application deadlines** for organizations range from **late January to early May** depending on the state, but concept papers for proposed projects may be due before this timeframe.



EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating Seasonality: Wisconsin-Grown Recipes for the Early Childhood Setting

WISCONSIN | \$74,000

In 2018, Community GroundWorks (now [Rooted](#)) and the [Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems](#) used SCBGP funding to develop the “[Celebrate Seasonality](#)” resources. Celebrate Seasonality is a recipe guide and training series to increase the use of Wisconsin-grown specialty crops in meals and snacks at Wisconsin ECE sites by (1) Educating ECE providers and support staff about accessing and preparing Wisconsin-grown specialty crops and (2) Exploring opportunities to connect underserved and beginning Wisconsin specialty crop growers with ECE sites.

Cooperative Extension System

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$60 million (FY 2021)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act Of 1977

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: 1890 Land-Grant Institutions

STATE CONTACTS: [Land-Grant University Directory](#)



OVERVIEW

The Cooperative Extension System (Extension) is operated through the nation’s Land-Grant University System in partnership with the federal, state, and local governments. Extension translates science-based research into resources and programming appropriate for public audiences. County-based educators work with communities to provide education and programming, and to collect input to advance future research. Extension programs may be a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed) implementing agency. Extension funds can be used to hire farm to ECE staff and can be leveraged for a wide variety of farm to ECE activities including local food education and technical assistance for gardening. A 100 percent match from non-federal sources is required.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about the [Cooperative Extension System](#)
- ▶ Connect with your [Land Grant University](#) and their local Extension agents to understand the existing farm to ECE work being conducted and advocate for additional activities in this space

TIMELINE

There are multiple capacity grant and competitive grant funding mechanisms that support Cooperative Extension and the **timeline varies** for each.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development Program | Iowa State University

IOWA | \$50,000

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach hired a full time Farm to School position within the “Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development Program” in 2016. The position was created to increase capacity for statewide farm to school work and community-level technical assistance. The coordinator role now also includes a focus on farm to ECE. The coordinator supports farm to ECE efforts in partnership with a Community Health Consultant at the Iowa Department of Public Health and a Farm to ECE Coordinator at the Iowa Association for Education of Young Children. Cooperative Extension provided approximately \$50,000 in funding to support staff time, staff travel, and Farm to School and Early Care conferences, in FY 2021. More funds for farm to ECE are anticipated in the coming year. This funding, along with grant funding, has enabled the coordinator, in partnership with Iowa Farmers Union and State Public Policy Group, to create the “[Local Food Healthy Kids](#)” policy initiative and the “[Local Food Makes Cents](#)” program, a local food purchasing incentive pilot for ECE sites.



Supplemental Nutrition Education Program – Education (SNAP-Ed)

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$431 million (FY 2021 with Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 Provision)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: USDA

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: FNS

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program in Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Final Rule published March 31, 2016.

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: State Agencies

STATE CONTACTS: [Implementing Agencies](#)

OVERVIEW

SNAP-Ed provides education, resources, and messaging within policy, systems and environmental-based interventions. The ultimate goal of SNAP-Ed is to increase “the likelihood that people eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles.” The USDA FNS distributes funds to state SNAP-Ed agencies who then disperse funds to more localized agencies to carry out programming. Agencies are eligible to implement SNAP-Ed programming if at least 50% of participants in the SNAP-Ed programming have incomes equivalent to 185% Federal Poverty Level. This means that Head Start and Early Head Start, as well as other ECE settings, can be eligible to receive funding to conduct SNAP-Ed services and could contact their nearest implementing agency to find out about accessing those resources.

SNAP-Ed funding can support a number of farm to ECE goals. For example, funds can be used to subsidize gardening materials like soil, shovels, and signage (excluding large infrastructure or equipment purchases), as well as taste tests and educational

items. Funds can provide reimbursement up to \$4.99 per item/person. The program’s flexibility also means expenditures for staff time, office space, supplies, and startup operations can be covered. Funding uses must be outlined in the implementing agency’s grant application, and changes are approved by USDA.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about [SNAP-Ed](#).
- ▶ Review the 2022 SNAP-Ed Plan [Guidance](#).
- ▶ Confirm eligibility and contact the closest [implementing agency](#) to discuss opportunities.
- ▶ Browse [SNAP Ed success stories](#), which include farm to ECE programming successes.
- ▶ Determine timeline for input on future grant applications to include farm to ECE.
- ▶ Encourage agencies to include farms to ECE in their state plan.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Steps to Health | North Carolina State University

NORTH CAROLINA | \$26,250

Steps to Health is [North Carolina State University’s SNAP-Ed Program](#), administered through county-based North Carolina State Extension staff, community partners, and Extension Master Food Volunteers. The program focuses on healthy eating and physical activity through nutrition education and supporting behavioral changes with policy, system, and environment change initiatives, including farm to ECE activities. Recent farm to ECE activities include up to \$250 reimbursement to eligible sites to purchase approved garden supplies such as garden wagons, adult and child size tools, cooking materials. Additionally, Steps to Health funds staff time to introduce young children to local food using the [Color Me Healthy](#) curriculum, which includes taste tests and other projects to help children appreciate fresh produce.

SNAP-Ed’s farm to ECE work is interwoven into other funding streams in North Carolina, including North Carolina’s Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Plan (see CCDF section on page 16), which includes farm to ECE training as a priority for its use of quality dollars.

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TIMELINE

Plans or updates to multi-year plans for implementing agencies are due for submission in **August** each year, with plan approvals typically released in early **October**. SNAP-ED reports to the Education and Administration Reporting System are submitted **December 31st**. Importantly, plan amendments must be received by **May 1st**.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM – EDUCATION (SNAP-ED) CONTINUED

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

**AZ Health Zone | University of Arizona
SNAP-Ed Program**

ARIZONA | \$118,930

Arizona's Yavapai County SNAP-Ed educators incorporate farm to ECE into nutrition and gardening lessons for Head Start children, cooks, families, and directors. All 36 Head Starts in Yavapai County regularly receive nutrition education provided by SNAP-Ed educators in the county. The Yavapai County SNAP-Ed budget for FY21 budget was \$118,930. Given that the primary focus of Yavapai County Cooperative Extension SNAP-Ed is to deliver nutrition education and help implement health strategies in ECE sites related to food systems (gardens, access to healthy food, and education on nutrition), most of the annual funding supports farm to ECE. Funds support 1.5 FTE positions and garden supplies. The individuals in these positions lead farm to ECE trainings and professional development to ECE providers, connect local growers with emergency food providers and organizations that donate local foods to Head Start families, demonstrate how to prepare local produce, and provide direct education and assistance to providers and community champions to build and maintain ECE fruit or vegetable gardens.

The SNAP-Ed educators devote time to developing partnerships with other organizations and participating in policy councils, community health partnerships, and farmers market meetings to make larger food systems changes in the county. Some funds are allocated to travel within Yavapai County, considering the county is approximately the same size, in square miles, as Massachusetts. SNAP Ed usually has enough funds to also build a couple of raised beds in ECE gardens each year.

Currently, Yavapai County has SNAP-Ed funding for 5 years, which they were awarded through a competitive process. They resubmit plans for the funds annually, but the county typically receives the same amount of funding each year for the 5 year period. They anticipate continued and growing success with farm to ECE in Yavapai County Head Starts.



State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Program

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$70 million (FY 2018–2023)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO)

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Sections 301 and 317(k)(2) of the Public Health Service Act [42 USC 241(a) and 247(b)(k)(2), as amended]

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing, every 5 years

ELIGIBILITY: State, county and city governments, Tribal agencies, nonprofit organizations, independent school districts, small businesses, higher education institutions, public housing authorities, and others.

STATE CONTACTS: [State Recipients](#)

OVERVIEW

CDC’s [SPAN](#) grant supports evidence-based interventions implemented at state and local levels to improve population health, nutrition, and physical activity. States agencies and other [eligible entities](#) can apply to SPAN to implement evidence-based strategies that increase access to healthy nutrition, opportunities for safe physical activity, and rates of breastfeeding initiation and continuation. CDC is currently funding 16 states to do this work, but previous iterations of this funding have spread a similar amount of funding among all states and the District of Columbia. There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for SPAN.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about the SPAN grant and its implementation guidance [here](#).
- ▶ Learn about current grant recipients and their project overviews [here](#).
- ▶ Read SPAN success stories, including stories about farm-to programs, [here](#).

TIMELINE

RFA is released every five years. The last **funding opportunity announcement** was released April, 2018. Another SPAN RFA is anticipated **April, 2023**. The RFA is typically released in **April** with applications due the following **July** and notification in **fall** of that year.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Supporting Farm to ECE Infrastructure | Connecticut Department of Public Health

CONNECTICUT | \$33,700

Connecticut started farm to ECE efforts with a 20-site farm to ECE pilot in 2019, using Preventative Health and Health Services Block Grant funding. The pilot was so successful, Connecticut added farm to ECE efforts to their SPAN grant. The state receives roughly \$850,000 annually from SPAN and applies \$33,700 of that to support statewide farm to ECE infrastructure. SPAN funds support 0.25 FTE dedicated

staff time for farm to ECE, a portion of a Go Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care ([GO NAP SACC](#)) subscription, farm to ECE implementation materials, and a contractor’s time for technical assistance.

Go NAPSACC is an online healthy eating, active living assessment tool for ECE sites, which includes a farm to ECE assessment module. SPAN funding supports the technical assistance provided to ECE staff using GO NAPSACC and provides funds to defray costs associated with farm to ECE best practices, like costs to build gardens or source local foods. [Connecticut’s farm to ECE program](#) expects to have 50 ECE sites implement farm to ECE in the coming year, supported in part by SPAN.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

COLORADO | \$11,000

Colorado received a USDA Team Nutrition Grant in 2016 to implement gardens, nutrition education, and culinary coaching in ECE sites. As that wrapped up, they began to identify additional funding sources to continue their farm to ECE efforts. In 2018, Colorado applied for and received SPAN funding (\$683,140 annually for 5 years). Colorado is now utilizing SPAN funds, along with several other state and federal funds, to increase farm to institution programs in the state to broadly increase local, healthy food access and build nutrition security in the most underserved communities. The Colorado team is currently testing local food procurement approaches and garden/nutrition education materials in ECE sites to determine best practices in Colorado. They are also identifying and creating missing farm to ECE resources, including the creation of a Colorado-specific farm to ECE toolkit. Colorado SPAN helps fund these achievements by supporting mini grants to ECE sites (\$11,000 annually).

Title V Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) Block Grant

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT:

State MCH funds: \$1 billion (FY 2020)

Federal MCH funds: \$515 million (FY 2020)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: HHS

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) MCH Bureau

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Title V of the Social Security Act

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: States and Jurisdictions

STATE CONTACTS: [MCH Directory of State and Territory Contacts](#)

OVERVIEW

The Title V MCH Block Grant is a noncompetitive grant that 59 states and jurisdictions (states) receive. Funds from the Title V MCH Block Grant help improve the health and well-being of America’s mothers, children, and families, especially those with low-incomes or limited access to health care. In 2019, the Title V MCH Block Grant provided access to health care and public health services for an estimated 60 million people, including 92 percent of all pregnant women and 98 percent of infants. The Title V MCH Block Grant gives states flexibility in meeting the health needs of their children and families.

The Title V MCH Block Grant uses a three-level performance measure framework to help states report data on impact, progress, and results, annually. The performance measure framework includes outcome measures, performance measures, and strategy measures. Each state is required by law to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment every five years to determine priority health needs and inform the state five-year action plan. For the five-year action plan, states identify 7-10 Title V MCH priority needs and select at least five national performance measures.

States are also required to match every \$4 received with at least \$3 dollars.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about [Title V MCH Block Grant](#)
- ▶ Find additional background and funding information [here](#)
- ▶ [MCH Block Grant Application/Annual Report Guidance](#)
- ▶ [MCH Block Grant Supporting Documents](#)
- ▶ Explore 2020 Title V MCH Block Grant State Action Plans and the breakdown of the national performance measures selected by states [here](#).

TIMELINE

States apply annually for Title V funding. Every 5 years, states submit a needs assessment to inform a 5 year action plan. The last needs assessment was due in 2020. The next needs assessment is anticipated to be due in **2025**.



EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

COLORADO | \$100,000

Between 2012–2020, Colorado’s MCH Title V Block Grant funded an early childhood obesity prevention priority with strategies in ECE settings primarily focused on physical activity, breastfeeding, and nutrition. Colorado shifted their 2021–2025 Title V MCH Block Grant State Action Plan, to “upstream” priorities to improve early childhood health by addressing structural and systemic inequities and social conditions. This means that Colorado’s MCH Title V Block Grant work now includes improving access to local foods, under the new nutrition security strategy. As part of this plan, Colorado allocated about \$84,000 in staff time for farm to ECE efforts, \$7,000 for resource design and translation of a Colorado Farm to ECE Guide, \$800 for Spanish interpretation at farm to ECE coalition meetings, and \$8,000 for farm to ECE mini-grants for programs serving children and youth with special health care needs.

Preventative Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$149 million (FY 2020)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: HHS

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: CDC, Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Public Health Service Act, The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981

FUNDING TYPE: Mandatory, Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: States, Territories, American Indian tribes, and Freely Associated States

STATE CONTACTS: PHHS Block Grant Program Coordinator Contacts

OVERVIEW

The PHHS Block Grant is a mandatory grant given to 61 recipients (all states, the District of Columbia, two American Indian tribes, five US territories, and three freely associated states) by Congress, annually. The PHHS Block Grant gives recipients the ability to address national health priorities in their jurisdictions with flexibility, innovation and community input. Recipients have the autonomy to set their own goals and program objectives based on local needs and strategies that align with CDC's Healthy People 2030 goals.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about PHHS Block Grant funding [here](#).
- ▶ Read about the diverse uses of the PHHS Block Grant [here](#).
- ▶ Consider your state's Healthy People 2030 goals and contact the **PHHS Block Grant Program Coordinator** to discuss how farm to ECE can help attain those goals.

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Creating Healthy Communities | Ohio Department of Health

OHIO | \$110,000

Ohio uses the flexible PHHS Block Grant (\$6.95 million for the whole state, FY 2021) to fund an impactful chronic disease prevention program, Creating Healthy Communities. Creating Healthy Communities funds 23 Ohio counties where the greatest opportunities exist to improve poverty, food insecurity and access, and physical activity infrastructure. The awarded counties then select evidence-based strategies to improve healthy eating or physical activity policies, systems, and environments. One of the evidence-based strategies that counties can select is "Farm to Institution", which includes farm to ECE initiatives. Three Ohio counties are currently implementing farm to ECE in their priority areas with Creating Healthy Communities funding. The PHHS Block Grant funds farm to ECE staff time both at the county and state level, related travel, resources, trainings, needed infrastructure changes to support increased ECE fruit and vegetable use and consumption, and ECE funds for farm to ECE implementation. The Ohio block grant coordinator estimates that the PHHS Block Grant provides roughly \$110,000 in support.



Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: Discretionary: \$5.9 billion (FY 2021),
Mandatory Funding: \$3.5 billion

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: HHS

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Care

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Child Care Development Block Grant Act of 1990, reauthorized 2014

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing, mandatory, matching, and discretionary funds

ELIGIBILITY: States, Territories, and American Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations

STATE CONTACTS: [State Child Care Administrators](#)

OVERVIEW

CCDF promotes high-quality, coordinated early childhood learning environments through subsidies for low-income children with parents working or engaged in educational opportunities. The program provides flexibility to states, tribes, and territories in meeting the needs of their children and families, promotes parental choice and consumer education about child care, and works to increase access to high-quality settings for low-income children. Funding supports both statewide subsidy programs, quality improvement activities, and efforts focused on infant and toddler care.

Eligibility criteria for families and children, applications and redetermination, family copayment, and provider requirements and reimbursement rates are all policies determined at the state level. As states are required to submit three-year state plans outlining their planned use of federal funds, language that supports or encourages farm to ECE activities can be incorporated. For example, relevant sections of the plan to highlight farm to ECE might include coordination with agencies responsible for CACFP and other relevant nutrition programs, information on training and professional development activities related to nutrition/physical activity for the child

care workforce, and how quality funds can be used to support the development or adoption of program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development. Adoption of these activities, partnerships, and professional development opportunities in state plans can support the long-term sustainability and infrastructure necessary for farm to ECE.

Unique opportunities for farm to ECE have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic and newly available relief funding, including an additional \$38.9 billion in CCDF stabilization and CCDF discretionary funds to states, tribes, and territories in the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act. Farm to ECE partners can connect with their state CCDF agencies to promote the equitable access and distribution of CCDF stabilization funds and ensure funds can be used to support activities (e.g., facilities enhancements to kitchens and gardening infrastructure or informal mental health supports). Partners can encourage state agencies to use CCDF discretionary funds for quality improvements in child nutrition, social-emotional health, and professional development for providers.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about [CCDF](#).
- ▶ Participate in stakeholder engagement opportunities when states are preparing their three-year CCDF plans.
- ▶ Propose language for states' three-year CCDF plans that supports and aligns with farm to ECE activities.
- ▶ Provide input into your state CCDF agency's process for distributing stabilization funds to support equitable access by ECE providers, particularly those with the greatest need.
- ▶ Work with state agencies and advocates to ensure ECE providers are allowed and encouraged to use funds in ways that support farm to ECE (e.g., facility enhancements or as informal mental health supports for children and staff) with Child Care Stabilization Funds.

TIMELINE

- ▶ Child Care Stabilization Funds must be obligated by **September 30, 2022** and spent by **September 30, 2023**
- ▶ Child Care Assistance/Discretionary Funds must be obligated by **September 30, 2023** and spent by **September 30, 2024**
- ▶ **Every three years:** Stakeholders have opportunities to comment on state CCDF plans
- ▶ **Summer 2024:** FY 2025–2027 state CCDF plans due to ACF

(continued on next page)

CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF) CONTINUED

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education

NORTH CAROLINA | \$69.6 million total CCDF federal allocation for NC (FY 2021)

North Carolina's [submitted CCDF Plan for 2022–2024](#) includes several references to farm to ECE/preschool. The plan specifically describes the various strategies to promote farm to ECE/preschool across ECE sites under sections focused on the Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care; Public-Private Partnerships; Additional Consumer and Provider Education; and Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce with CCDF Quality Funds. For example, the state agency, Division of Child Development and Early Education, describes their involvement in the Farm to Preschool Network-Systems Change workgroup, the types of farm to ECE professional development activities to motivate ECE providers to start farm to preschool activities, and the collaboration underway to add online farm to ECE training modules to state agency platforms. The plan also outlines ways that parents and ECE providers can access information about farm to ECE/preschool through North Carolina's Cooperative Extension and the SNAP Ed program, and how to source locally produced foods with CACFP through the farm to CACFP "Learning Burst" webinar series, and other resources from the [Center for Environmental Farming Systems Farm to ECE Initiative Website](#) and the [North Carolina Farm to Preschool Network](#).



Head Start and Early Head Start

QUICK FACTS

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$10.6 billion (FY 2021 with Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 Provision)

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: HHS

ADMINISTERING OFFICE: ACF, Office of Child Care

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, expanded through Head Start Act of 1981, and reauthorized in The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, 2007

FUNDING TYPE: Ongoing

ELIGIBILITY: A local public or private nonprofit agency, including community-based and faith-based organizations, or for-profit agency, within a community. Programs may operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and territories. Funds are also available to American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs.

CONTACTS: [Grantee Profiles](#)

OVERVIEW

Early Head Start (EHS), which serves pregnant women and children up to age 3, and Head Start (HS), which serves children between the ages of 3 and 5, provides comprehensive services focused on early learning and development, health, and family well-being for low-income families. Programs support school readiness through a variety of services and settings. Nationally, there are over 1,600 HS/EHS agencies across local communities. Eligibility for HS/EHS is determined by the [HHS poverty guidelines](#), though foster children, children of homeless families, and those receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI are also eligible.

As HS/EHS is a federally operated program, funding flows from HHS directly to Head Start agencies and their grantees. Through the American Rescue Plan Act, an additional \$1 billion dollars was appropriated to HS/EHS agencies. As many of the farm to ECE goals around child nutrition and family engagement align with HS/EHS Performance Standards, partners should connect and collaborate with local agencies and

grantees in their community to offer training, tools, and resources to program directors and staff on the [natural alignment between Farm to ECE activities HS/EHS program goals](#).

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

- ▶ Learn more about [HS/EHS](#)
- ▶ Connect directly with HS/EHS grantees in your community about how farm to ECE aligns with their goals for child nutrition, family engagement and learning in the [Performance Standards](#) and [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#).
- ▶ Learn how farm to ECE supports the goals of HS. See: [Supporting Head Start Programs with Farm to ECE Models: Growing Head Start Success with Farm to Early Care and Education](#).
- ▶ Locate HS/EHS grantees in your community and build relationships with your [State Head Start Collaboration Office](#).

EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT

North Carolina State University Center for Environmental Farming Systems

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina's Farm to ECE partners have seen some success engaging HS programs who were facing re-competition in 2019, which resulted in successfully incorporating farm to ECE training into a HS grant application. The Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) met with HS program directors and nutrition managers to make the case for farm to ECE as an innovative strategy that will distinguish their programs. They emphasized how farm to ECE work fits into their application process, by highlighting the types of resources and training support that is available. After the meeting, the CEFS training program coordinator developed and shared a farm to ECE training plan and budget for programs to include in the HS application. Ultimately, HS programs were able to increase their connections with local extension agents and other HS programs, Farm to ECE toolkits and resources, and local non-profit organizations. CEFS developed an ongoing HS relationship, which includes farm to ECE training and professional development.

TIMELINE

The [Designation Renewal System](#) established **five-year grant periods** for HS awards. Any agency with a **specified condition** (deficiency) during the course of the grant period would re-compete for the next round of funding in their area. Competitions are made available through a **funding opportunity announcement (FOA)**. Agencies without deficiencies receive additional five-year grants without competing.

Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax: A Case Study of Boulder Colorado

BOULDER | \$100,000

The Sugar Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Distribution Tax enacted in Boulder, Colorado, in 2017, places a two cents per ounce excise tax on the distribution of beverages with added sugar and other sweeteners. The tax is paid by the distributor of SSB products. Similar taxes are being adopted or discussed in other large U.S. cities. Revenue from this tax has been \$2.5 million on average for FY 2020 and 2021. The revenue covers the tax's administrative costs, after which additional revenue is spent on health promotion and chronic disease prevention interventions that focus on low income residents and those most affected by chronic diseases linked to sugary drink consumption.

The city established the Health Equity Fund to allocate SSB Tax revenue in alignment with the legislative intent. The city defines health equity as “the absence of systematic health disparities based on socio-economic factors, and the ability of all residents to reach their full health potential, regardless of their life circumstances.” The Health Equity Fund provides a significant allocation of funds to support local farms to ECE in areas with most health disparities. These expenses include about 30 percent FTE, general operating expenses related to the program, farm to ECE incentives for ECE recruitment and participation, and farm to ECE materials. For 2022, the estimated Health Equity Fund request for farm to ECE was over \$100,000. The City of Boulder's Health Department augments the SSB funding with private foundation funds and state funding to support a nationally leading farm to ECE program in Boulder.

